

Shipping & the Sargasso Sea

Extensive and increasing shipping traffic crosses the Sargasso Sea year round.

Cargo and tanker vessels dominate traffic volume and spatial extent, while passenger vessels concentrate along narrower seasonal corridors.



The spatial overlap between shipping lanes and ecologically important habitats creates cumulative environmental risks.

Risks to wildlife include ship strikes, underwater noise, oil spills, pollution, and transfer of exotic species through ballast water and biofouling.



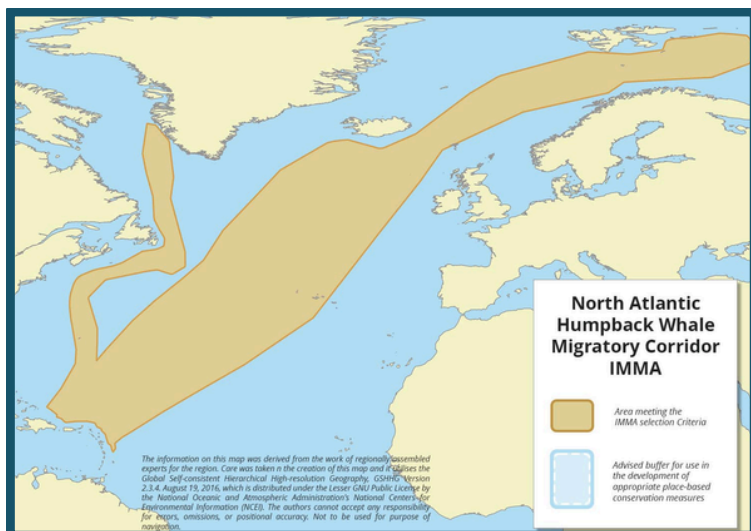
Photo crédit: Andrew Stevenson

Physical disturbance from vessels may also affect floating Sargassum mats

which is an essential developmental habitat for many species and supports a diverse rafting community.



Photo credit: JP Rouja



North Atlantic Humpback Whale Migratory Corridor Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA)

- Established as an IMMA in 2025 by the Marine Mammal Protected Areas Taskforce, which is part of the IUCN.
- Humpback whales migrate across the Sargasso Sea between summer breeding grounds in the West Indies and winter feeding grounds in more northern latitudes.
- This scientific, peer-reviewed designation has no management implications, but it can be a powerful tool for conservation and policy change.

Shipping industry stakeholder engagement strategy

- Facilitated by independent consultants (NLAI)
- Seeks to engage with shipping industry on issues of mutual collaboration.
 - Three meetings have been held across 2024 and 2025 in London, Copenhagen, and Singapore.
- Examining opportunities for voluntary collaboration on conservation including:
 - Information gathering
 - Data sharing
 - Speed reduction measures to mitigate cetacean collision risks

